

*A Dissertation on a most valuable Gold Coin of
Edmund Crouchback, Son of Henry III. By the
Rev. Mr. Pegge.*

Read at the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES, May 20, 1773.

DEAR MR. NORRIS,

I AM extremely obliged to you for the drawing of lord Milton's *Pectore* [a]; and in return I beg leave to present you with the following short memoir, concerning a curious, and, in my opinion, an almost inestimable, Coin of Edmund Crouchback.



THERE will be no occasion for me to descant in many words upon the *Seal* of Edmund surnamed Crouchback, engraved in Speed [b], since that must be already well known, with all the particulars and circumstances relative to it. However, as the Seal has some connexion with the series of our English gold coins, as will appear in the sequel, I shall venture to trouble you with a few cursory remarks upon it.

MR. SPEED calls it a *Seal*; and we must believe he had seen it in that shape in the Cotton Library. Edmund there sits *à la souverain*, on a throne sufficiently resembling those of his

[a] See Vol. III. pl. xix. p. 357.

[b] Speed's History, p. 631.

father

father and uncle Richard earl of Cornwall, both which may be seen in Speed and Sandford; which last has also, and I presume from Speed, caused the obverse of this Seal of Edmund's to be engraved in his Genealogical History [b] as such.

BUT what ensures it, infallibly, to the class of Seals is, the Golden *Bulla*, of exactly the same type,*engraved by the Society of Antiquaries in plate xliii. N° III. It then belonged to Edward earl of Oxford, and was afterwards purchased by Mr. West; and, as this Bulla or Seal does not now appear in the Cotton Library, it was probably thence purloined, and sold to the earl. Be this as it may, it weighed eight penny-weights, and, as appeared by the silken strings passing through it, had been appendant to an instrument, and, as is said in the Society's print, to a bull of Pope Alexander IV, to confirm to prince Edmund the kingdom of Sicily and Apulia. But this, Sir, you will deem highly improbable; for why a Seal of this titular king, prince Edmund, should be annexed to a bull of the Pope's, even though it related to the kingdom he was to be invested with, is perfectly inconceivable to me, the *Bullae* hanging at the papal instruments of that name being of a nature widely different from this. I should therefore rather suppose it had belonged to some instrument of king Edmund, and I am fully persuaded that Prince Edmund had a seal of this type, for the reasons given above.

BUT, however strange it may appear, this Seal was undoubtedly a coin or medal too; for the late Thomas Barrett, esq; of Lee in the county of Kent, had a gold medal of Edmund, which agreed exactly with these exhibits of the seal, both in the

[b] Sandford's Genealogical History, p. 103.

obverse and reverse; and this is at present in the possession of my respectable friend his son. This medal, which I have often both seen and handled, weighs fifteen penny-weights, which just answers to sixteen Florens, the Floren being first coined A. 1252, at sixty grains[c]; and it is indisputably a coin or medal, there being not the least appearance of its having ever hung, as a bulla or seal, to any instrument whatsoever; a circumstance which, when I examined the piece, I was particularly attentive to. In short, Sir, as it is as clearly a coin, as it was a seal, we are obliged to conclude it was *both*; and that the punch or die, that served for the purpose of striking the seal, was used also for the coining of money.

THE next enquiry then must be, by whom this fine piece was coined? The story of prince Edmund, so far as relates to this matter, and without entering minutely into the affair of the Pope's disposal of the kingdom of Sicily, is this. In the year 1254, Innocent IV. offered our king Henry III. the kingdom of Sicily, for his second son Edmund: the king accepted the offer, which unhappily involved him in great distress, by becoming a principal source of the barons wars. Prince Edmund, thus collated by the Pope, took the stile and title of king of Sicily, and it seems had the same title put both upon his seal and money. Upon Innocent's death, Alexander IV. obtained the Papal chair; and he, by a ring, invested prince Edmund, A. 1255, with his kingdom: but the earl of Leicester at length, A. 1265, renounced, in the king's and prince's name, all manner of claim and pretension to that crown. This is, in brief, the whole of the affair. And upon the face of the matter, as the seal has so much the air of an English seal of the times, and was probably both made and used in England by

[c] Steph. Mart. Leake, p. 44.

prince Edmund himself; one has all the reason in the world to imagine, that the coin was struck by him too, especially if, as the presumption is, it was coined with the same die. But Sandford tells us, that Pope Alexander "caused, in honour " of Edmund, certain pieces of gold to be stamped with this " inscription, *Edmundus rex Siciliæ* [d]," whence perhaps it may be conjectured, that this piece of Mr. Barrett's may possibly be one of those coined by the Pope. I know not on what authority Sandford says this, and yet I have a slight remembrance of having read it elsewhere; but, supposing it to be true, that the Pope caused some gold pieces to be struck, Mr. Barrett's coin can never be one of them, as it so perfectly resembles the seal, and was probably coined with the same die, and consequently must have been minted in England, where Edmund's seal was apparently made. Besides, the letters of the seal and coin are the English ones of the time, as every body must allow, who will be at the pains to compare them with those on the seals of that age in Sandford: the form and fashion of the obverse accord likewise with that author's seals. Whence the conclusion is, that the piece was coined here in England in the name and by the authority of prince Edmund.

If it be asked, whether this coin ought to have a place in the English series or not? I answer, the probability is, that it was struck by the authority of an English prince, Edmund, son of king Henry III, and he certainly has as good a title to have any coins or medals that bear his name taken notice of by an English medalist, as either Robert Curtois duke of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, or Eustace earl of Hologne, son of king Stephen. Let us only attend to the reverse of the coin, *Edmundus Natus Regis Angliæ illustris*, where, by calling himself the king of England's son, he asserts a privilege exactly

[d] Sandford, p. 105.

parallel

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parallel to that of Eustace. But what approaches nearest to the matter in hand, is the case of Edward the Black Prince; whose gold coin, though struck in another country, and by an authority separate and independent of his father, as we may suppose this of Edmund to have been, have a choice place in our cabinets, and are sought after by our Antiquaries with the utmost eagerness and sollicitude.

BUT put the case for once, that the piece was coined by his Holiness, it was still done under the authority of prince Edmund, king of Sicily, whose name it bears, and must have been intended to run and be received here as his money. Whence it follows, that it ought in reason to be deemed a part or parcel of the English series, as the coins of King Henry VIII, struck by the archbishops of York, or the bishops of Durham, are.

THE result, Sir, is, that we have here a gold coin or medal of the English series minted many years before the Vulgar Aera, when our gold is supposed to have been first made; and even somewhat before 41 Henry III, or 1257, when this king, the father of prince Edmund, issued his gold pennies [e]; for our piece was in all probability coined in the year 1254, or 1255 at farthest, when the prince received the investiture of his kingdom. It consequently serves very finely to fill up that gap in our gold cabinets which intervenes between the reign of William the Conqueror [f] and the 41 of king Henry III.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

Whittington, 8 March,
1773.

SAMUEL PEGGE.

[e] Mr. Snelling's Introduction to View of Gold Coins of England.

[f] Gent. Mag. 1757. p 499.



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